THE Reconstructionist

Vol. XI. December 14, 1945 Tebet 10, 5706 No. 15

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REALITIES AND VALUES *CORRESPONDENCE*

Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Israel's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

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From a student at Harvard University:

I would like to thank you for many fruitful hours of Reconstructionist reading and for the hours of thought and discussion which follow upon the reading. You might be interested to know that my copy of *The Reconstructionist* makes the rounds of several friends at Harvard of many different convictions in Jewish and secular life, and several without conviction or prior interest in anything Jewish, before it wends its way to a friend in the service. . . .

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EDITORIALS

IN MEMORY OF SIX MILLION DEAD

THE trial of the German war criminals is focusing the world's attention upon the calamity that the Nazis inflicted upon our people. Our losses are staggering, and are greater in proportion than those of any other people. Over six million non-combatant men, women and children, more than a third of the entire Jewish population of the world, have been exterminated by the most diabolical devices of physical and mental torment. Those who fell into the clutches of the barbarous Nazis and yet managed to survive are, for the most part, mere human wreckage, broken in body and mind. At the very time that the victorious governments are sitting in judgment upon the perpetrators of these unspeakable crimes, pogroms are reported from places as wide apart as Poland and Argentina. The Nazis' conspiracy against mankind is being liquidated, but the first war-aim of the Nazis, the utter destruction of the Jewish people, has been all but achieved and nothing effective is being done by the nations that are judging the Nazi criminals to prevent its ultimate achievement.

The constant repetition of the tales of Nazi atrocities has apparently made men so accustomed to hear them as to render them callous. We resent the callousness of the nations to our tragic plight. But what of our own callousness? What are we doing to voice our grief and the sense of our loss? How are we rising to the crisis it presents? What are we doing to insure that, though the defiled and abused bodies of our brothers and sisters are rotting in the unholy soil of Germany, their souls shall forever be bound *bitzror ha-hayyim* with the living Jewish people?

We are not a people unschooled in suffering. "If there are ranks in suffering," said Leopold Zunz, "Israel takes precedence of all the nations." Yet even in the long record of Jewish pain and travail there is no parallel to what has befallen us in our day. The nearest approach to it was perhaps the havoc wrought by the Romans after the final suppression of the last Judean revolt under Bar Kokba.

But to every past catastrophe in its history, our people responded in ways that made the very awareness of its loss an incentive to carry on Jewish life. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the suppression of Bar Kokba's rebellion, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, the pogroms in the Rhine region during the Crusades and those in Poland at the time of the Cossack invasion—all of them were national catastrophes, and to all of them

our people responded in ways that left a permanent expression of the thought and emotion that the events called forth. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and again by the Romans gave us Tisha B'av, the suffering after Bar Kokba's rebellion gave its character of mourning to the period of the Sephirah; the expulsion from Spain was signalized by the interdict against ever again settling in that country; the pogroms at the time of the Crusades and of Hmelnitzki were recorded in Kinot and Selihot. Is our present grief to find no permanent expression? Are our dead to die a second death by being consigned to an unlamented oblivion? Or shall we so memorialize them that later generations of our people will say: In the days of the Nazi madness, one-third of the Jewish people was wiped out, but our fathers would not let the ultimate triumph rest with the brutal Nazis; they mourned their dead; they closed their ranks; and they resolved to cling all the more firmly to their people and their faith?

Just what form our response to the tragic fate of our people under the Nazis should take demands careful consideration. It should be of a two-fold character. It should, in the first place, express itself in cultural and liturgic form such as will convey to future generations both our grief for the dead and our pledge of loyalty to their memory. The inclusion in the Kaddish of some additional phrase making specific reference to the victims of Nazi brutality, the setting of a day in the calendar when all worshipers in all congregations might join in saying the Kaddish in their memory,—these are possible liturgical forms in which we might record our mourning. But there should also be some way of registering our loyalty to the memory of our dead in practical terms. Some act of self-denial on our part which would at the same time contribute to the rehabilitation of Jewry and redeem the death of the six millions of our people from futility.

To be effective, whatever is done by way of response to the blow we have sustained must be shared in by all Jewry. It should be planned by a body of men that is representative of all our important national associations. Some organization that represents a large cross-section of Jewry should take the initiative and summon all other Jewish groups to collaborate in this purpose. We recommend that the American Jewish Conference, as representing the greatest number of Jews of any organization in this country, should convene the proposed convocation. If our people does not respond to a tragedy of this character, its soul is as dead as the bodies the Nazis have slain.

A DESPERATE NEED FOR SOCIAL SERVICE

REPORTS reach this country from various sources that the "displaced persons" who survive have become all but completely demoralized. They are suffering from psychic shock. They seem to have forgotten all standards of cleanliness; and morally, they have sunk very low. And no wonder! They have lived for years under the cruel threat of Nazi persecution, followed by the slow, devastating cold pogrom, followed by deportation, followed by the experience of witnessing the extermination of families, friends and fellow Jews, followed by the brief respite of hope soon dashed to earth. Now, months after "liberation," they still live in camps. They have become brutalized.

These reports come not from those who hail an opportunity to paint a black picture of the Jew. They come from heartbroken sympathizers, agonized by the spectacle of men and women reduced to

spiritual pulp. We are not proud of these shadows of people—but as Americans and as human beings we should not be so proud of ourselves either. They are the worst sufferers from this war, far worse off than the dead, or even the wounded in battle. No matter what polical or economic changes are made as a result of the war, so long as these survivors are not brought back to sane and normal manhood and womanhood, we shall have lost the war to Hitler.

Of course, they ought to be permitted to migrate to Palestine. We have said this again and again, and we repeat it now. But that is not the whole story: these people must be made fit to go—anywhere. And the longer they are neglected, the more difficult will it be to transport them altogether. They need rehabilitation. They need to learn once again to want to live, to trust their fellow men; they must relearn some of the basic habits of civilized living.

There is only one type of person who can help them, and that is the social worker. Only the social worker, trained and sympathetic, will gradually humanize them again. The administrator who comes in with so many and so many cartons of clothes and boxes of food will not do this job. The medical staff that brings serums and anti-toxins cannot do this job. To be sure, food and medicine are indispensable, but not enough.

Where are the social workers who can tackle this problem? They are here in America, working in the thousands of social agencies in every Jewish community throughout the land. These social workers should organize their own system of self-conscription, through the National Conference of Jewish Social Welfare, and see to it that hundreds of Jewish social workers are made available for service overseas. This is exactly what the Rabbinical associations did when the war broke out. They were not conscripted by the government, but they knew that the Jewish men in the services needed chaplains. So they set up their own system of drafting rabbis. The congregations cooperated with true patriotic fervor. The Seminaries geared themselves to an accelerated program to provide interim rabbis; and the men themselves came forward enthusiastically.

True, there is no "war" on now; but for the Jewish people—as for many others—the war goes on. The need for social workers is, if anything, greater today than was the need for chaplains when hostilities began. To leave one's post in the social work field involves sacrifice; but the Jewish people has the right to ask that sacrifice from its professional personnel.

The Joint Distribution Committee is the logical agency to mobilize the social workers, to give them whatever specialized additional training they may require, and to dispatch them to those areas where they are most needed. There should be no dearth of available workers. As the armed forces demobilize, many men and women are undoubtedly being freed for this kind of task. Certainly, those who did not serve in the armed forces during the war should consider this an opportunity to do their bit.

Time is of the essence. The "displaced persons" become more and more of a problem to themselves and to society so long as they have not been helped to turn the corner toward healthy mindedness.

THE FREEDOM TO BE JEWS CHALLENGED

JEWISH hopes received another blow with the announcement that President Truman and Secretary of State Byrnes, both of whom had supported the Taft-Wagner resolu-

tion favoring unlimited Jewish migration to Palestine and the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish commonwealth, were now opposed to its passage. President Truman's negative reply to the question addressed to him at a press conference, "Do you now favor the resolution?" leaves it ambiguous whether he opposes the eventual establishment of the Jewish commonwealth or merely the present passage of the resolution. He made it clear, however, that he does not want to prejudge the findings of the Commission of Inquiry. Since the terms of reference of the Commission exclude consideration of a Jewish state in Palestine, it is hard to give an optimistic interpretation to our government's action. It looks very much as if its policy is determined by a general decision to ally United States and British foreign policy against alleged expansionist designs of Russia in the Middle East. To this policy, the Jewish people is to be sacrificed.

We cannot help resenting, and resenting bitterly, the way statesmen play cat and mouse with the Jewish people and with Jewish lives. When they feel they have something to gain from us, they make extravagant promises and invite us to spend blood, toil and treasure to realize the hopes they hold out to us. And when it seems more expedient to betray us, they discover that "conditions have changed" and welch on their promises. They "liberate" Jewish victims from the Nazis only to keep them imprisoned in areas poisoned with Jew-hatred, where it is impossible for them to live decent lives, to raise families and establish home and communal ties. Worse still, they threaten Jewish refugees with deportation to "lands of origin" from which they fled in horror and to which they can only return in mortal dread. And when Jews protest against this treatment and against the lawless effort to bar them from their national home, these statesmen lecture them about wanting to "get to the head of the queue."

What sort of human beings then are such men as Attlee and Bevin, Truman and Byrnes? Are they monsters like the Nazi war criminals who mock at all humane considerations? Hardly. They are merely flustered and muddled political leaders, who have inherited a multitude of unsolved problems that baffle them, and who, for lack of the wisdom and courage to find just and therefore permanent solutions for their problems, sieze on the most facile temporary expedients and rationalize these as though they were solutions.

With regard to the Jewish question, it is apparent that Bevin, and possibly the other statesmen who fall in with his policy, have lit upon a simple and at the same time a radical solution of the Jewish problem. The Jewish problem can best be liquidated by liquidating the Jewish people. Not—God forbid!—that they intend to complete the extermination of the Jews begun by Hitler. They are humane people sincerely sorrowful over the suffering of the Jews at the hands of the anti-Semites. They are ready enough to recognize the right of Jews to live as individuals—but not as a people.

What else can be the meaning of Bevin's studious avoidance of the adjective *national* before *home* when speaking of the promise made to the Jewish people (he would say "to the Jews") regarding Palestine? To make his meaning more clear, he even cautions Jews in the diaspora against establishing Jewish "enclaves," in the midst of the body politic. He is thus reverting to the policy of the Emancipation Era when the Jews were given civil rights in the expectation that this would lead to their eventual assimilation. It is significant that the most effective exponent of that policy in those days

was Napoleon, a dictator as bent on regimenting the minds of his people for military conquest as was Hitler.

To be sure, Napoleon did not interfere with the "religious freedom" of the Jews and neither would Bevin. He does not object to Jews praying for the restoration of Zion, provided they pray only with their lips and not with their hearts, their toil and their blood. He will let them dream Messianic dreams, provided they make no concerted effort to make them come true. He will let them use the Hebrew language in worship, but only as a classic sacred language, not as a vehicle of self-expression for the soul of a living people. As a small esoteric sect, the Jews would be no problem, and eventually the type would become extinct.

The Jewish people, however, will not a second time be caught in this trap. We understand too well the meaning of democracy to submit voluntarily to such *Gleichschaltung*. We worship the God who revealed Himself to our fathers as their deliverer from Egyptian bondage that they might serve Him as a people. We will assert our right to exist as a people, our right to be Jews, to cherish our culture, and our faith. We did not defy Hitler's attempt to exterminate us in the heroic battles of the Warsaw and Bialystock ghettoes nor help to turn back Rommel's armies from the gates of our homeland only to submit to the ultimate achievement of Hitler's design by accepting euthanasia as a solution of the Jewish problem.

We will resist! We will resist with all the legitimate means at our disposal! In Palestine, they sing, as a song of the national rebirth, words which the prophet Isaiah addressed to the powers that conspired against Israel in his day: "Take counsel together, but your plot will be nullified; have your say, but your word will not stand; for God is with us."

The peoplehood of Israel, the land of Israel, the language of Israel—these are indispensable to the realization of our religious ideals no less than is our religious ritual. In defending them, we champion the cause of true religious freedom for all religious, racial and cultural minorities against imperialistic designs at regimenting souls. That is our duty as well as our privilege. We must not fail.

NEW PRINCIPLES IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

AT A time when the cause of world-peace and international cooperation is encountering one difficulty after another, when the world seems to be reverting to dollar diplomacy, power politics and competetive armament, any news is welcome that gives us some reassurance that the world has emerged from the moral debauch of the war years at least a little wiser for being so much sadder. We scan the news eagerly for some ray of light, some intimation of a better day that is dawning after our long night.

To those who thus "watch for the morning," the opening address of Justice Robert H. Jackson at the Nuremberg trial of war criminals contains a message of cheer. It sounds a new moral note in international affairs which at least makes us wonder hopefully whether it may not be the harbinger of the long awaited new world-order. For it establishes two new principles in international law that have never been invoked before and that contain much promise for the future. The first of these principles is that the waging of aggressive war is, in the most literal sense, a crime, one for which those who are mainly responsible for perpetrating it can be held personally liable, and may have to pay for with their lives. The second is that atro-

cities committed by governments on a large scale even against their own citizens or subjects constitute a crime against humanity for which the perpetrators may be brought to judgment by an international tribunal.

In the early history of mankind hostility between neighboring tribes or nations was regarded as normal and warfare an honorable means of national aggrandizement. Under the teaching of the great ethical religions, the military tradition was countered with another that looked forward to an end to warfare and its attendant miseries. But in the absence of any world government and any adequate means of adjusting international disputes, warfare still continued to be deemed a legitimate and necessary state activity. Only after World War I, when it became obvious that either mankind must abolish war or war would abolish mankind, did the nations, through the Kellog-Briand Treaty ban war "as an instrument of national policy." But, as no specific sanctions for its enforcement were provided in that treaty, it obviously lacked "teeth." Justice Jackson helped to put teeth into that treaty and other international conventions by insisting that aggressive war is itself a crime and the initiators of it punishable.

He disposes of the doctrines by which, in the past, warmakers and the prepetrators of war atrocities escaped punishment. "One who has committed criminal acts," says Justice Jackson, "may not take refuge in superior orders nor in the doctrine that his crimes were acts of State. These twin principles working together have heretofore resulted in immunity for practically everyone concerned in the really great crimes against peace and mankind. Those in the lower ranks were protected against liability by the orders of their superiors. The superiors were protected because their acts were called acts of State. . . . Modern civilization puts unlimited weapons of destruction in the hands of men. It cannot tolerate so vast an area of legal irresponsibility."

On the Nazi crimes against Jews and other opponents to Nazism in Germany, he also announces a new doctrine of far-reaching significance: "How a government treats its own inhabitants generally is thought to be no concern of other governments or of international society. Certainly few oppressions or cruelties would warrant the intervention of foreign powers, but the German mistreatment of Germans (a reference shown by its context to apply to German treatment of Jews) is now known to pass in magnitude and savagery any limits of what is tolerable by modern civilization. Other nations, by silence, would take a participating part in such crimes."

The doctrines thus enunciated by Justice Jackson, if subsequently used by the United Nations Organization as precedents, may be of the most far-reaching consequences. But whether they will be so used remains to be seen. The fact that they have been uttered in the course of a trial of the vanquished by the victors in a world-war may militate against their effectiveness. Aggressor nations may draw the moral that, if they are defeated they are criminals, but if they win they are heroes. Nevertheless, the mere utterance of such doctrines in the course of proceedings on which the attention of the world is focused is a gain. The words are quotable. They will be serviceable in counteracting the kind of isolationism and indifference to humane considerations which enabled the Nazi conspiracy to proceed without intervention by other nations. It is not a final victory in the war to end war; it is not even a triumphant conclusion of a decisive battle in that war; but it is a tactical advantage gained. Above all, in these melancholy

days, it is an encouragement to observe some effort at articulating principles which may serve as the legal and moral foundations of a stable and just world order.

REALITIES AND VALUES

THE FOLLOWING INCIDENT contained in a report from Palestine in the New York *Post* illustrates the reaction of Palestine Jews to the British betrayal. The *Post* reporter was present when casualties were being brought into the hospital from the fighting at Rishpon, where British forces clashed with Jews. The ambulance in which they were brought was marked "In memory of Jews Slaughteerd in the Bialystok Ghetto." "I wonder," remarked the driver, "when an ambulance will be memorialized for the dead of the Palestine ghetto."

THE DEATH OF HARVEY GAUL, noted Pittsburgh musician, will be sincerely mourned by Jews. For though he was a Christian, he was deeply interested in Jewish music and made some notable contributions to its development. He was for many years director of the chorus of the YMHA of Pittsburgh and, in that capacity succeeded in interesting both Jews and Gentiles in Jewish music. Following a visit to Palestine, he wrote a number of Hebrew songs which have been sung by Jewish choruses throughout the country.

ONE OF THE MOST TRAGIC EFfects of World War I was the alienation of Russian Jewry from the rest of world Jewry. The hostility of the Soviet regime in those days toward all forms of religion and toward all direct ties with non-Communist communities led many Jews to look upon the Jewry of Russia, once the reservoir of Jewish culture and religion, as lost to world Jewry. Russian isolationism and the anti-religious spirit in Russia seem to be waning and we are happy to hear, from time to time, items of news that suggest that Russian Judaism may yet unite with the main stream of Jewish life. One such promising token comes in an announcement made by Rabbi Samuel Solomonovich Cherbrutsky, head of the Moscow Jewish community. He has offered to supply communities in former Nazi-occupied territories with Jewish religious literature and other materials. Not so long ago it was only atheism that Russian Jewry was exporting to other lands; today it is religious books and ceremonial objects.

IT HAS NOW BEEN REVEALED, according to *Trend of Events* for November 23, 1945, that the United States government is building an airport at Dhararap, Saudi-Arabia, at a cost of $6,000,000, under an agreement drawn up by the State Department with Saudi-Arabia, which will be turned over as a gift to King Ibn Saud. That is bad enough. One wonders what Americans are going to benefit by turning over a $6,000,000 airport paid for by American tax payers as a present to Ibn Saud. But that is not all. It appears that the American army, which is in charge of the construction, acceded to Ibn Saud's demand that Jewish soldiers and civilians be barred from working on the project. That is an outrage.

THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST HAS frequently published articles on the improvement of the Jewish liturgy, and with this end in view, our movement has issued the New Haggadah and the Sabbath Prayer Book, both of which have given rise to much discussion of liturgical questions. It may, therefore, interest our readers to know that a renewed in-

terest in the development of the liturgy has also been noticed among our Christian neighbors. *Information Service,* published by the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America notes that "one of the most tangible expressions of the new interest in worship is the activity in the field of formal liturgy." It ascribes this to a number of causes most of which are irrelevant to Judaism. But two related reasons help account for Jewish as well as Protestant renewal of interest in the liturgy: (1) "The interest in worship is intensified by the present personal and social turmoil, which leads people to seek the abiding and eternal"; and (2) . . . . worship offers timely means for revival of religion . . . sincere worship issues in a strengthened and more devoted faith."

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A TWO-DAY INSTITUTE ON Judaism and Race Relations sponsored by the Commission on Justice and Peace of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, adopted a program calling for far-reaching reforms in race relations both here and abroad. Stressing the problem of anti-Negro discrimination, it urged denial of tax exemption and other government support to institutions that practice discrimination, advocated the outlawing of restrictive residential covenants and demanded Federal protection of all civil rights, including enactment of a Federal anti-lynching law. It called for the elimination of racialism from our immigration and naturalization laws. It sought protection against group libel by "hate literature," recommending that the right be granted to sue for an injunction, compulsory retraction or minimum penalty. On the subject of relations with the colored races of Asia it condemned the tendency of the United States to support efforts at their resubjugation, and the administration of dependent regions "primarily in the interest of alien merchants and investors." It demanded immediate steps looking to the independence of the Indians, Burmese, Koreans and Filipinos, and the substitution of UNO trusteeship for colonial control over peoples not yet ready for self-government. A bold and just program—will the congregations of the rabbis who participated in its formulation back them in helping to implement it?

The Outlook of Reinhold Niebuhr—

A Description and Appraisal

By MILTON STEINBERG

REINHOLD Niebuhr represents many fine things to a large and steadily increasing number of his contemporaries. He is first of all a Christian theologian of distinction, erudite and profound, one of the best interpreters in modern idiom of the religious outlook generally, of Calvinist Protestantism in particular. Again, he is one of the chief exponents of the thesis that religion belongs in life, indeed that one of its major functions is to serve as a principle both of criticism and of inspiration. In this attitude he is very close to normative Judaism, a fact of which he is well aware, as his own words attest: "I have as a Christian theologian sought to strengthen the Hebraic-prophetic content of the Christian tradition."

The Social Outlook of Niebuhr

In his desire to bring religion to bear on social problems, he is by no means

alone. What sets him apart from the crowd is the fact that he is singularly free from the naivete, intellectual and pragmatic, exhibited by most religionists in economics and politics. If he has all the idealism of "Christian socialists" such as Walter Rauschenbusch, he discloses also a reassuring practicality, a firm grasp on social theory and actuality alike.

Among other things, Doctor Niebuhr is one of the few non-Jews who understand Judaism and the Jewish question. He knows Zionism well and sympathetically. His observations on the Arab-Jewish problem are among the wisest, most penetrating that have emanated from any source. His statement in his Introduction to Waldo Frank's *The Jew in Our Day* on the effect of the *galut* on Jewish universalism is, in its perceptiveness and sensitivity, nothing less than brilliant. Jews who are liberals like him for his liberalism. If they are survivalists and Zionists as well, they appreciate him further for his sympathy, strong yet unsentimental, with their aspirations. Religious Jews owe him a special debt. For in focusing the light of the God-faith onto social issues he has aided them in the discharge of their own spiritual commitments.

His Insistence on the Reality of Evil

His largest contribution, however, both to Jews and Christians, both to secular and religious thought, is his reaffirmation of the reality of evil in man and society. This, in so far as one exists, is the central, recurrent motif of his writing and teaching. It is the special contribution of his Calvinism to our generation.

Modern men have with fair consistency been naively optimistic as to human nature and society. They have gone ahead on the blithe assumption that neither required much more than a bit of tinkering to be redeemed. As to the character of this tinkering, opinions were divided. In the case of the individual, they ran a full gamut from better housing through improved education to the application of the newer psychiatric techniques. As for society, all that it lacked, most men have imagined, was one or more political reforms, economic reconstructions or religious revivals to be well on its way toward becoming the Kingdom of God.

Not that evidences were wanting to shake this light-heartedness. The great religious traditions, including the Jewish, all made much more of the stubborn perversity of man's heart than pleased their modern communicants. Experience, too, demonstrated that each ardently sought-after reform, no matter how beneficial otherwise, left the problem of individual regeneration and social rebirth but little advanced. And recent events have disclosed the depths below depths of bestiality lurking in the human animal. The typical modern man has persisted incorrigibly in his good cheer, in the faith that, despite all evidences to the contrary, men could be saved simply by the discovery of the right formula or device.

This, many of us owe to Reinhold Niebuhr: that he has reminded us of the depth and tenacity of evil in the individual and society.

The central thesis of most of Doctor Niebuhr's writing is this: that, despite all the workings of religion and conscience, man is basically a creature of self-love, that is to say, of pride and selfishness. This self-love is more dangerous, both morally and in its workings, than cruder impulses such as hatred and lust. These latter stand in open, unmistakable contradiction to the ethical principles which most men profess and which consciously at least, they seek to follow. But egoism is subtle and elusive, insinuating itself into every life interest, pervert-

ing purposes, corrupting logic, tainting idealism and all the time draping itself in respectability, in the robes of dispassionate logic and disinterested righteousness.

The Role of Religion in Human Life

To the many uses of religion generally recognized, there is added, in the light of this analysis, one more of supernal importance: Religion offers the sole possibility of deliverance from the tyranny of self-love.

This purpose it serves variously, by pointing out to us the truth concerning our moral natures, by forever subjecting our behavior to basic criticism, by posing before us ideals incompatible with egoism. What is more, only religion can do this job, for only religion posits another transcendent realm of being from which man and history can be viewed critically. Again, because man partakes of this other order of reality, he is not trapped in his own naturalistic character. And his history, which by its inherent nature cannot be self-redemptive, is vindicated on another plane. Doctor Niebuhr's religion, in sum, is not some interesting adventure in metaphysical speculation, nor some additional but ultimately superfluous sanction for the good life. It is a desperate necessity — man's only hope and method of escape from the evil inherent in himself.

From these key premises flow streams of implications. In *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1936) Doctor Niebuhr analyzed the operations of collective egoism in the nation, the class—privileged and proletarian—the state and its machinery, arguing that social conflict is inevitable, that "power must be challenged by power," that the law at any time represents not theoretical justice but the resolution of colliding social forces.

Ethics and religion, to be sure, have a part in the social scene. They set up standards of judgment and values toward which, despite their self-love, men strive. Especially when one class, party or nation acquires power and slides toward its abuse, as it inevitably tends to do, morality, reason and religion, are mobilized into action by the unbalance and may operate vigorously for the restoration of an equilibrium. Spiritual elements, in other words, are not without influence on the economic order and the state. Yet society remains an arena of conflicts, and the sooner religious idealists reckon with that fact the better for religion, moral idealism and society alike.

In *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (1942) Doctor Niebuhr applied his touchstone insight, in the first instance, to doctrines concerning human nature, and then to the concepts of sin and the sinner. What emerges most conspicuously from this impressive, rich and immensely learned work is that sin has two faces. One of its countenances is well known: the *undervaluation* in thought and action of the human being who is after all nothing less than the child and embodiment of God. Its other face, limned for us by Doctor Niebuhr, is far less familiar: sin as the *overestimation* of man, as the forgetting in mind or deed that he is no better than a creature, as the ascription to him or to his communal institutions of a status more than that of creatureliness and dependence vis-a-vis Deity.

The Need for Democracy

Now, in *The Children of Light and Darkness** Doctor Niebuhr directs his fruitful intuition to "a vindication of democracy and a critique of its traditional defense." Taking his text from the verse (Luke XVI, 8) which asserts that the children of this world are wiser than the children of light, Niebuhr applies the

* Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1945, 190 pp., $2.00.

phrase "the children of this world" (or of darkness) to those "who know no law beyond their will and interest." The children of light are the idealists, after all their kinds and fashions, who, if they run true to form, are likely to be much less clearheaded, realistic and tactically cunning than their antagonists. Witness the thinking on democracy by its advocates.

Democracy is on the one hand the by-product of the rise and maturation of bourgeois civilization. As such it is a temporary and contingent device. On the other hand, it is a permanently valuable form of communal organization, rooted in the deepest requirements of man's nature and collective living. It is indeed the only social form that does justice to the twin human necessities, freedom and order, that allows the human being to be, as he must be, both a free spirit and a member of a community.

The children of light, however, for all their passionate devotion to democracy, fail to understand its true urgency. Therefore they plead for it childishly, apply it naively, and in effect contribute to its failure in prestige and action.

They rest their case on its behalf on sentimental notions of the reasonableness, harmlessness, benevolence and altruism of man, taking it for granted that all which men require is enough light and liberty, and they will find a way, a good way, for themselves. The unhappy truth is that men are capable of refusing to be illumined, of deliberately choosing the evil, that, thanks to self-love, they may calculatingly set their own interests above those of the community, their class above country, their nation above mankind.

This, the children of light are unable or unwilling to concede. Consequently, they often end up disillusioned, or outwitted by shrewder men of ill-will, or, for want of realism, prove incompetent in dealing with social problems—developments all tending to the surrender or break down of the democratic ideal.

Doctor Niebuhr's argument in *The Children of Light* emerges then in this conclusion: Democracy is to be advocated not because men are so rational and good as to make it natural, but because they can be so blind and self-centered as to make it indispensable.

Only through democracy is there any hope for a constructive solution of the deep, terrible antinomies and tensions of human existence: the freedom of the individual which will permit his self-fulfilment *versus* an ordered community which is both the preconditon of that fulfilment and one of its necessary outlets; the preservation of some kind of property right as a natural extension of personality *versus* such delimitation of that right as is commended by morality, and dictated by the need of preventing property power from becoming tyrannical; that liberty for the religious sect and ethnic minority which will allow it to realize itself and will preserve for mankind the values of variety *versus* the unity of the community; loyalty to the nation and national interest *versus* international organization, a precondition for peace and national survival. For all these tangled issues, democracy alone offers not solutions—Doctor Niebuhr does not expect any basic human impasse ever to be finally resolved—but an arena and atmosphere in which these isues can best and with the least destructiveness be made viable.

And even as democracy is essential to human welfare, religion, to repeat a point already made, is essential to democracy, supplying it with criteria and values from outside man and beyond society, establishing man's transcendence over his natural being thus assuring his inherent dignity and freedom, providing a vindication of the human career that is not otherwise

forthcoming, since history neither interprets nor redeems itself.

Here in skeletal form is Doctor Niebuhr's plea for democracy and critique of its traditional defense. A schematism such as this does not begin to do justice to the richness of his thinking, to the wisdom to be found in his *obiter dicta* and, along side paths, to the main lane of his argumentation — his description, for example, of the sentimentalism and optimistic naivete concealed in Marxism, his discussion of the three possible approaches to the problem of religious diversity, more particularly his searching analysis of secularism in that connection; his so-timely presentation of the problem of international organization, including a vivid treatment of the fallacies involved in both the utopian and cynical approaches to the matter. In other words, it is a rich as well as a closely reasoned and pertinent book which Doctor Niebuhr has given us.

Inconsistencies

Yet it and his other works are open to a two-fold criticism which I cannot forego setting forth at this point.

Like all persons moulded by a tradition, Doctor Niebuhr displays in his thinking the pattern of that tradition, the tropisms, as it were, of its reasoning. When Doctor Niebuhr contends that the individual, try as he will, subject himself to religion, morality and reason as he may, can never escape the taint and corruption of self-love, nor can the community, strive as it may, ever achieve a justice higher than the resolution of contending interests, he is being true to the Calvinist forbears of his spirit who held that man was born damned to begin with, and that society was not and could not be the scene of either his or its own salvation. From which the Calvinist drew the rigorously indicated inferences of the need for divine grace and intervention, and of other-worldly salvation.

Doctor Niebuhr follows this design boldly to a point. Then his speech, as I catch it, blurs. He obviously entertains in *practice* this-worldly hopes both for the individual and the community, or he would not be so passionately concerned with both. And yet he simply refuses to admit that fact or be cheerful concerning it.

At the same time his *logic* points directly and exclusively to a super-mundane denouement. But unlike his ancestors he will not make his assertion of such a position full and vigorous, refusing to go further than to say that man is ultimately a citizen of another non-temporal realm.

But can he have all this both ways? Can he talk inevitable damnation and act meliorism? Can his logic imply an altogether other-worldly salvation and his final conclusion be somethnig less.

The Pessimistic Tone of Niebuhr's Philosophy

With one other aspect of Niebuhr's outlook I find myself out of harmony. I have long tried to determine in my own mind what it is which makes the tone of Judaism so different from the thought-current within the Protestantism he represents. After all both traditions are acutely conscious of the reality of evil. The prophets make much of it, as do the rabbis whose references to the *Yezer Ra*, the evil impulse in man, are more numerous than can be quoted. And yet there is a divergence in spirit between the two milieux. Both acknowledge the same actualities, but somehow with diverse responses. There is joyousness, cheer, hope even for this world in Judaism; grimness, pain and despair of anything before death in Calvinist Protestantism.

The difference I have come to believe is one of perspective, of the place to which evil is assigned in the envisagement of the cosmic scheme. In rabbinic Juda-

ism, the central position is held by God and His goodness, against which evil throws a shadow but from the periphery. In Calvinist Protestantism, God and His goodness are, needless to say, also placed in the key position — but it is evil, its roots and flowerings which get almost as much attention. Observe that it was John Milton, a Christian of this stripe, who, writing a cosmic epic, managed in the end to make not God or the Christ but Lucifer its protagonist and incidentally its most interesting character.

By the same token, Doctor Niebuhr's emphasis on the role of evil is no idiosyncrasy, nor is it merely the overstressing of a neglected truth, overstressed to offset the neglect. It is nothing less than a historic pattern of thought and feeling. To one reared in the Jewish tradition, something of morbidity seems to pervade this motif in Protestantism.

Two men, let us suppose, are both afflicted with a chronic and always dangerous disease. One makes that circumstance the focal point of his thought and feeling. He knows all along that he has in himself elements of health, that his life situation is still enjoyable and worthwhile. His illness, however, looms most prominent in his spiritual landscape and so absorbs his first thought and effort. The other is fully aware of his ailment. He recognizes that he dare not forget it for an instant, or live even most fleetingly in violation of the restraints it imposes, or cease ever to hedge it in. Yet for him the most conspicuous feature of his being is not this, grave as it is, but such basic health as he possesses under his malady. He is, therefore, likely to get along better as patient to his physician, as laborer, as kinsman, as citizen, certainly as a companion to others who, in like case with him, travel the road by his side.

Analogies are always dangerous; no simile should be pressed too far. Yet Doctor Niebuhr's outlook does appear to me to partake somewhat of the melancholia of the former; historic Judaism of the cheer of the latter.

* * *

All these defects are dwarfed by the brilliance and constructiveness of the intellect of this man, the many and large contributions he is making to our spiritual and social life, and foremost among these, that he is opening our eyes to actualities which we in our excessive optimism have refused to see, that he has taught us again what our fathers knew and we have refused to credit, a hard, grim truth concerning the place and power of evil in man and society.

Did Hitler Win?*

By A PROTESTANT CHAPLAIN

HITLER set out to annihilate the Jewish people, and he very nearly accomplished his purpose. By means of the most expert slaughter system ever used against human beings, he has reduced the European Jewish population that came under his control from 7,000,000 to 40,000, according to most recent estimates. Certainly that accomplishment was near enough to 100 per cent achievement to be hailed by fervent anti-Semitics as an astounding victory.

An allied victory, however, did halt the Nazi death factories short of their intended goal (though just barely). There are

* Reprinted from *Christianity and Crisis*, November 12, 1945.

still some Jews left. But even against this remnant Hitler seems to have won the other aspect of his fight — he has alienated them from the heart of the world. It seems incredible but it is all too true— no one wants these homeless survivors of the Nazi bestiality. For years now, in righteous Christian indignation, we have "preached deliverance of the captives," and at last we have "set at liberty them that are bruised." Now, with indifferent heartlessness, we condemn these same people to the impossible exile of homelessness," "Oh, send them back to the countries from which Hitler took them!" someone says. In some cases that might work. French Jews, if there be any left, could no doubt return to their country in safety. But to send the Jews back to many of these European countries would be like rescuing a man from a den of lions and then making him take refuge in a cave infested by cobras, for anti-Semitism is apparently even more virulent than ever. As I write this there comes a radio report that Poles in Cracow have burned a synagogue and that many Jews have been killed in fresh outbreaks. Another indication of what is in store for the Jewish people is given in the abuse they suffer in the D.P. camps, even in American territory, at the hands of other D.P.'s. On August 14 an American official of UNRRA charged, for example, that "the Polish camp leader at Valterdigen was making life miserable for Jews by anti-Semitic activities." We are children uninitiated in social psychology and in the reality of post-war Europe if we think that we have downed the persecution of the Jews by defeating Hitler and destroying the Nazi party. Central Europe is not redeemed from anti-Semitism, and the Jews should not be condemned to remain therein.

But where will they go? Christian America is horrified at the very thought of revising immigration quotas, with many lesser nations copying her attitude. As a result, no nation of any consequence is stepping forward with a hospitable invitation to settle. Had the Balfour Declaration, agreed upon in good faith by the victorious allies after the last war, been carried out, these people could look forward to a home and a new start in Palestine. But the mighty British lion has been afraid that a few Arab politicians might make trouble — or something. Now these people are squatting in Germany, generally treated like the rest of the D.P.s even though many of the latter willingly came to Germany to work in the Nazi war machine, threatened with return to hostile countries, given haphazard relief while a politically hamstrung UNRRA tries to make up its mind whether they are entitled to help or not (International Red Cross has been shoved aside, and even the Jewish relief organization has been refused permission to minister to these survivors), and argued over by the victorious powers. The European war ended three-and-one-half months ago, and these children of suffering are still suffering. Are we Christians or are we international politicians first?

I have tried to understand how a victory in which my America played so commanding a role could still leave these tragic people so abandoned. I have watched American army officers of Jewish background nearly beside themselves with compassion, shame, anger, and frustration at what they have seen, and heard, and I have wondered why the rest of us care so little. I believe that it is because we do not know the people. We were shocked and sickened by the terrible cruelty of the Nazi horror camps, and it seemed that at last we had awakened. But then we dissipated our moral indignation in an adolescent attempt to be "tough" with the Germans. We tried

to implement this idea in a sweeping non-fraternization policy that was non-selective and entirely negative. It didn't work. By that time our moral indignation had run low. You see, we put all our emphasis on the fact that Germans were a cruel people. Though the German people did produce an amazing amount of cruelty, that generality was too indiscriminate to stand. We were ignoring the individual, and only alienating many potential allies among the German populace, as well as losing the respect of our own men by our official stupidity. Meanwhile, having directed our emotional powers into an attempted hatred of a whole race of Germans for persecuting a whole race of Jews, we now have too little emotional power left to single out the individual survivors of the horrors and love them as brothers. In our occupation we have followed no clear cut philosophy based on our historic national principles, and we have lost the individual in generalities. America needs to meet these individuals who have endured and survived the lethal tortures of Nazi inhumanity and who are now enduring the hopelessness of our dallying with the question, "Just how Christian can we afford to be with these people?"

Perhaps we should not be too harsh with ourselves for losing sight of the individual sufferer. The methods of torture and murder were so fiendishly devised and the numbers who fell under those methods so fantastically large, that we were halted in a fascinated stupor before the gas chambers and flesh hooks, were confused by the blur of writhing millions, and were bewildered by the undistinguishable groanings of huge masses. It was impossible to give a name to each naked body and to each despairing cry. We shuddered at so great a suffering. But one can soon stop shuddering if the suffering remains a nameless mass. The shuddering becomes a resolute compassionate ministry of love only when that suffering is broken down for us into Marys and Johns and Abrahams and Rebeccas.

I could give many interesting illustrations of the suffering of the Jews. Let me confine myself to only two illustrations—one of a Jewish Chaplain in the American Army who lost all of his family in the Nazi plague, and one about Leon and his mother.

The chaplain knows very little about what happened, but he does know how his father died. He was shot by the SS, but not fatally. Dumped into a grave, he was half buried alive when he begged for another show. I did not have the heart to ask the chaplain if the request was granted. I am worried for the well-being of this chaplain. Weighed down by his own personal grief, pressed in from every side by the tragedy and suffering of his people, and completely frustrated by the odd attitude of the nation in whose army he serves, he is a living cry of pain. In the middle of his services the thing overwhelms him and he weeps. There is no peace for him, no satisfaction in the end of a world war, no victory to be celebrated. His is the hurt of hopelessness. It is his lot to live in a world dominated by Christian powers.

Someone brought over Leon, a soft-eyed and gangling blond boy, the kind of a child that many of us service men are hoping to return to before long and envelop in paternal embraces. "Here is a rare thing," said the chaplain, "a Jewish child." I was startled, even as I loved the boy. Why, children were the most common phenomena which we found in strife torn Europe. No matter how battered the city, how few the young men, kids seemed to squirt out from the cracks in the masonry when one drove through.

But he was right—there were almost no children among these refugees. Jewish children have been either gassed, unborn, or unconceived. They just aren't.

This lad was alive only because a kindly Ukrainian gentile had taken him and loved him as his own, while his mother clung to life in a concentration camp. By one of those happy coincidences that seem tinged with the mercy of God, the mother and son were reunited after her liberation.

The magnitude of their suffering has been terrific. The chaplain's father, Leon's mother, and the thousands of others have survived a hell beyond our imagination and comprehension, and yet they are less wanted than the broken down tanks which we are carefully gathering up all over Germany, repairing and sheltering against the weather like beloved old pensioners.

Before we left the refugees, they sang the "Song of Buchenwald" for us. I was tremendously moved by the music of the song and the spirit of the singers, but not until I had the words translated did I realize what I had experienced. Here was a song born directly from the anguish and despair of Buchenwald, and expressing a courage that was the imperishable will to live of a wondrous people.

To the British Colonial Office

By FRIEDA CLARK HYMAN

MR. BEVIN PLEADS FOR DECORUM

". . . If the Jews with all their suffering want to get too much at the head of the queue, you have danger of another anti-Semitic reaction through it all."

—Ernest Bevin

Be calm
Oh froward sons of Israel,
Seek not to head the queue.
There may you stand
Where ovens roar,
Not here
Upon our diplomatic mart.

Softly, softly, sons of Amos,
We see your wounds.
But that is no physician's gown
Around the form of Justice.
Here she is an aproned monger
Using our scales.

Hush!
Be not importunate.
We have a patent remedy.
There . . . above . . . an artful sun
We call Committee.
Her rays will heal,
In time, in time.
(In chilling, stilling time.)

But oh, no frowns.
No dark indecorous scowls
Upon our sun.
It pales her blushing face
Attenuates her therapy.

Be calm. Be patient.
Smile.
Our sun might thaw one drop of frozen blood.
Might dry one suppurating stripe,
Or even two.

But better still,
If you would die,
Calmly.
Genteelly lie beneath dissembling earth.
No judgmatic eye
Could blanch our sun
Shining just for you.

BUCHENWALD AND THE COLONIAL OFFICE

I yielded not to them.
My flame of olive oil
Consumed their whips of steel.

in a father's land
a sister's hand
can comfort one.

I did not pray for rest.
The releasing touch of death
Was not my craven goal.

in Dagania now
a brother's plow
sings songs of spring.

I fled from Buchenwald.
When moon and stars despaired
I merged with their dark shame.

o'er Israel's heights
the sun shines bright
in tune with earth.

I breathed their prurient air.
Obscene, decayed, depraved,
It mocked the pride of men.

the Jordan stream
can purge this dream
from tortured mind.

I slept in corpse-lined ruts.
In pits that stank of flesh
I fouled my tattered cloak.

on Hermon's breast
a man can dress
in pure white robes.

I ate scorched withered grass.
At alien bitter wells
I slaked my burning thirst.

the rubied wines
burst from the vines
on Sharon's plain.

I laughed on the Patria's deck
At the blue green waves of the east
Dancing and welcoming me.

no shame no strife
but hope and life
on Zion's shore.

I laughed. For I knew not then
The brutishness of men
Who dwelt on Britain's shore.

Book Notes

A PARTISAN GUIDE TO THE JEWISH PROBLEM, By Milton Steinberg. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis. 308 *pp.* $3.00.

A *PARTISAN,* Webster's dictionary tells us, is "a person who takes the part of another; an adherent to a party, faction, cause, or a person; especially, a strongly devoted adherent, often an unreasoning, blind or fanatical one." In calling his book "A Partisan Guide to the Jewish Problem," Milton Steinberg is less than fair to himself. He is certainly an adherent of Dr. Kaplan and Reconstructionism, but he does not, as the word in some of its meanings might imply, use a truncheon; he is not unreasoning, blind, or fanatical in his devotion to any cause. In fact, "A Partisan Guide to the Jewish Problem" is a reasoned, lucid and persuasively eloquent book, as candid and brave and stirring as the author himself.

In this book he expresses with admirable eloquence and felicity of style what many rabbis and Jewish educators have been trying with less success to express in their speaking, writing and teaching. "A Partisan Guide to the Jewish Problem," however, is no mere restatement of warmed-over answers to stale problems, to be placed in the hands of problem Jews. It has a quality of exhilaration and proud courage which will give renewed faith and hope, as well as cogent arguments to all who become weary and jaded (and who of us does not from time to time?) in their ceaseless struggle with the Jewish problem or with those who raise it or are bedevilled by it.

The Jewish problem is basically, as Milton Steinberg sees it, how the Jew can survive creatively in the modern world. His approach is a psychologically sound one. His starting point is the modern world and the Jew's place in it—the problem of the social status of the Jew. It begins with a survey of the havoc wrought by World War II and contains a forceful brief of what needs to be done to effect the rehabilitation of European Jewry. It goes on with a detailed treatment of the problem of anti-Semitism, which Steinberg views as "only the latest, though climactic, manifestation of an ancient and stubborn evil." Steinberg's treatment of anti-Semitism is eclectic and exhaustive. He is no partisan for any one explanation of anti-Semitism nor for any one remedy to cure it. He concludes his discussion of anti-Semitism with a statement of four principles which all Jews, especially those concerned with anti-defamation work and the defense of Jewish rights, should adopt as guiding principles. Though he posits the need by Jews to resist anti-Semitism with all the vigor, courage and militancy they can muster, he rightly stresses the point that "the Jews need today, as never before in modern times, a vital and significant Judaism."

In the second part of the book, Steinberg deals with the problems of self-acceptance — the psychic perils that attend the Jewish identity, and the choice confronting the individual Jew and the Jewish group between assimilation and survival. Steinberg himself states that "if anti-Semitism is the most spectacular Jewish problem and, in a practical sense, the most urgent, the issue of Jewish morale can fairly be said to be in its own

quiet fashion spiritually the most desperate." He analyzes sympathetically the unhappy plight of the assimilationists and escapists, of those who hate themselves for being Jews, and counters with a declaration of the faith of a Jewish survivalist, which is one of the best statements in the book—a succinct and happy summary of his own credo, of what he gets out of his Jewishness and why he is the better off for adhering to it.

In part three, Steinberg treats of the problems of tradition. Here he seeks a definition of the concepts *Jew* and *Jewishness*. He presents a critique of the current philosophies of Judaism and Jewish survival and comes up with a creative program — the Reconstructionist program. In this section of the book one will find not only one of the most lucid expositions of the philosophy of Reconstructionism, but also an insight into its evolution in terms of its founder, Mordecai M. Kaplan. For, as Steinberg observes, "Reconstrutionism is, in every essential feature, the creation of a single thinker who evolved it step by step in the course of a lifetime of questing," and "the record of the travail of this individual is therefore the best introduction to his conclusions."

The fourth part of the book deals with Zionism and Palestine — the light behind the Zionist enterprise, the achievements of modern Palestine, and the significance of the Jewish homeland for American and other Diaspora Jewries. In the chapter devoted to a discussion of the pertinence of Palestine for American Jewish life, we will find, for the first time, an all-embracing summary of the meaning that Palestine has had for many American Jews and can have for many more. The relation of Palestine to the problem of anti-Semitism in America, to the problems of economic distribution and Jewish morale, to community organization, to the crisis in Jewish ritual and to the problem of Jewish culture in America is brought home with definiteness and with great effectiveness.

The Epilogue, called "The Game and the Candle," will be cherished for itself and may perhaps live though quotation, long after other parts of the book have been forgotten. It is a beautiful and touching credo and sums up for all in our generation whose lives are dedicated to the perpetuation of Judaism, what it means to be a Jew.

"A Partisan Guide to the Jewish Problem" is not an all-inclusive guide to it. The Jewish problem is a complex of problems, and Steinberg is dealing only with the most urgent and desperate aspects—the crucial aspects of the problem. Thus many aspects of the Jewish problem or rather of Jewish life — insofar as they are not crucial or urgent problems — are not treated at all or receive scant consideration. The economic and occupational structure of Jewish life is discussed from the point of view of the occupational concentration of Jews within the American economy and in connection with the problem of anti-Semitism. The sociological aspects of Jewish life — the problems of population, migration, birth rate, intermarriage — are dealt with hardly at all. The problems of language, of Hebrew and Yiddish literature, of Jewish organizations (as distinct from community organization), of social service and recreation, and other such problems are not included or are touched upon only in connection with the four large problems enumerated above. I state this so that the reader will know what to expect. This book is not intended to be a contemporary history of the Jews, nor a book on Jewish sociology nor a guide to all Jewish problems.

The book might perhaps have been improved in a number of ways, but such

udgments are largely a matter of indi-vidual taste. The first chapter of the book "Out of the Straits," dealing with the rehabilitation of European Jewry, is too much like a documented brief pre-pared by some organization such as the American Jewish Conference. It seems out of place where it is, despite the logic which dictated its present position, and should have been placed elsewhere in the book. There are too many chapters devoted to anti-Semitism, altogether out of proportion to its importance, and par-icularly in relation to the other problems discussed as well as to those omitted. And lastly, the fact that there is no discussion of Jewish education seems to the reviewer to be a serious omission. Jewish education must be central in any program of Jew-ish survival and there should have been another section in the book on "Problems of Transmission."

This book should be given the widest circulation possible among thinking Jews. It is timely, it is beautifully written, it is persuasive. Let us hope that it will reach those Jews (and Gentiles) who need it, and that they will read it through to the finish and be heartened and uplifted to a new height by its epilogue.

SAMUEL DININ

CORRESPONDENCE

Reply to Rabbi Klappholz on "Ritual in the Jewish Home"

Sirs:

Rabbi Klappholz, in his critique of my article, "Ritual in the Jewish Home," fails to see what is implied in his remark, that "we ought to revive our rich traditional heritage before making changes which lack the sanctity and the experience of our historic past." In my article I stated that "the pattern which it (tradition) has passed on to us still pos-esses sufficient vitality to serve as the basis for most suggestions." Tradition, as Rabbi Klappholz states, was the origin of most of the suggestions I had to make. But while we ought to emphasize traditional ceremonials as much as possible, we cannot revive our tradi-tional heritge *without* making changes and innovations. One cannot constantly return to the past without adjusting that past to the conditions of the present. If Rabbi Klappholz can satisfy himself and his congregation by adhering to traditional ritual without change, I have no quarrel with him. The article was meant for Jews who do not accept his premise that tradition is sufficient. That there are such Jews is obvious.

I take exception to Rabbi Klappholz's state-ment that "Jewish tradition permitted sufficient elasticity of observance to allow for the ex-pression of individual initiative." I am fully aware of the changes produced through *minhag* and through lenient interpretations of various laws. A policy of *conscious* change, however, was never accepted by tradition as legitimate. Nor was the deviation of the individual Jews from the group pattern generally accepted as a praiseworthy example of initiative.

Rabbi Klappholz's criticism of my sugges-tions for the Sabbath suffers from a failure to look upon ritual from a creative viewpoint. The procedures he outlines may prove satis-factory to him and to many other Jews. They are not, however, the only means of observ-ing the Sabbath in the spirit of Judaism. The custom of reading the Sidra of the week should not prevent other Jews from reading selections from Hebrew literature. The custom of blessing the children should certainly be kept. My article was admittedly not all-inclusive.

J. J. COHEN

Comments on the Reconstructionist Prayer Book

Sirs:

The *Sabbath Prayer Book* published by *The Reconstructionist* is an event both for the sup-porters of the movement and for its oppon-ents. It is the first real contribution to the liturgy of our day which is neither another Reform prayer book nor another Orthodox prayer book.

There will be primarily two groups of peo-ple who will object to it. The first and most vociferous will, of course, be the militant fundamentalists, who are sorry that they did not burn the Union Prayer Book or the Jas-trow Prayer Book and who, in repentance for their sin of omission, may perform many a

sin of commission. The other group will include many different kinds of people whose antagonism will be aroused by some vague emotions like frustrated orthodoxy, irritation with eclecticism, preoccupation with problems of originality or simply inclination toward picayune criticism. They will find many details in the book to which they object. Some, and perhaps all, of these objections may be justified. But to make them the basis of an adverse judgment upon the book is, I think, not to see the forest for the trees. The book is beyond doubt a great accomplishment.

I too find some details to criticize. I do so, however, simply as one expressing an opinion and thus in my small way participating in this great accomplishment. I assume that none of these points have been overlooked by the editors, that those worthy of discussion have been thoroughly looked into and that the present publication is the result. My few exceptions should be considered merely as votes cast and not as stones.

To begin with, I must again register my objection to the attitude on the doctrine of the "Chosen People" which has, it seems, become part of the Reconstructionist platform and which is clearly expressed in the Introduction to the Prayer Book. (I distinguish between the doctrine of the "Chosen People" and ideas, such as are expressed in the passage *Shelo Asanu Kegoyay Haarazot* of the *Alenu,* which has properly been changed on page 194). For those who believe in God, history, not supernaturally conceived, definitely demonstrates that the Jews were singled out for a career different from that of any other people. That career has been to profess the highest and purest form of monotheism in every generation. It is true that "other peoples can and should be dedicated to the same purpose." But the fact is that in the past they were not so dedicated. And unless we are to say that that is an accident and that this particular historical fact occurred outside of the guidance of the Ruling Power of the Universe, it is evident that the Jews are the "Chosen People." This career has definite religious implications and there is no more fitting place for its expression than in prayer. It is, I think, less accurate to say of the Sabbath that it is the "choicest of days" (page 131) and hallowed "above all other days" (page 33) than to say of Israel that it is the "choicest of peoples" and hallowed "above all other peoples."

Finally, it is a necessary and useful spiritual balance for much of the mental and emotional strain to which the Jews are subject. A prayer which includes this doctrine thus attempts to perform its true function as a prayer, namely, to afford spiritual strength and healing by giving the worshiper a sense of worthwhileness amidst his troubles. It would be well if we could instil into our people the feeling that "when Israel came forth out of Egypt. . . . Judah became His sanctuary and Israel His dominion." (Psalm 114). I think that we Jews have more to fear for those who suffer spiritual humiliation than for those who suffer the lack of spiritual humility.

The second point I wish to discuss is the general tone of the content. The editors have set themselves the task of making the prayers thoughtful and devotional. I believe they have accomplished their purpose. Here and there the tone comes dangerously close to the argumentative. But I think that the argumentative tone is successfully avoided. Worship may be praise or petition. Petition may be modified into meditation. When it becomes instruction or discussion, it ceases to be worship and becomes study. Traditional services contained study as part of worship because the study passages were accounted as of supernatural origin. For us, however, instruction is naturally apart from worship and has its place in the actual reading from the Torah, Prophets and other traditional literature and around the sermon.

It might be helpful in the use of the Book to relegate such readings as are primarily instructive rather than worshipful to the study period of the service.

The translation is generally very good, though some may miss the famous expression "the beauty of holiness" which has been replaced by "holy array." These are questions of accuracy which we must leave to the scholars. The editors have here produced a very readable and understandable English version.

The Hebrew versions of the original English prayers are excellent and in keeping with the traditional language of the rest of the service. Often they rise to the heights of the prose-poetry of the traditional prayers.

The Supplement comprising more than half the book, is one of the great contributions of the book. It covers a wide range of themes and every period of Jewish literature. It proves that Jewish religious inspiration has never ceased. It will undoubtedly be a source of great inspiration to the rabbi and the congregation. It is a production for which the Reconstructionist Foundation and the editors are to be both thanked and congratulated.

ARTO S. HYAMS